



(From the Atlantic Monthly for April, 1877.)

A STROLL THROUGH THE NEW BUCKINGHAM HOTEL, NEW YORK.

THE most perplexing question now demanding the attention of thoughtful people is the house and home problem. Any man able and willing to work can earn a living. To make the earning bring the best living is a matter few accomplish with entire satisfaction. Given an income, it would seem a simple matter to hire a house and keep it in the conventional manner; but so many questions of economy of time, strength and money arise; so many problems of physical and mental health appear, that people of sense are seriously asking the good of it all, and are casting about to see if there be not a more excellent way.

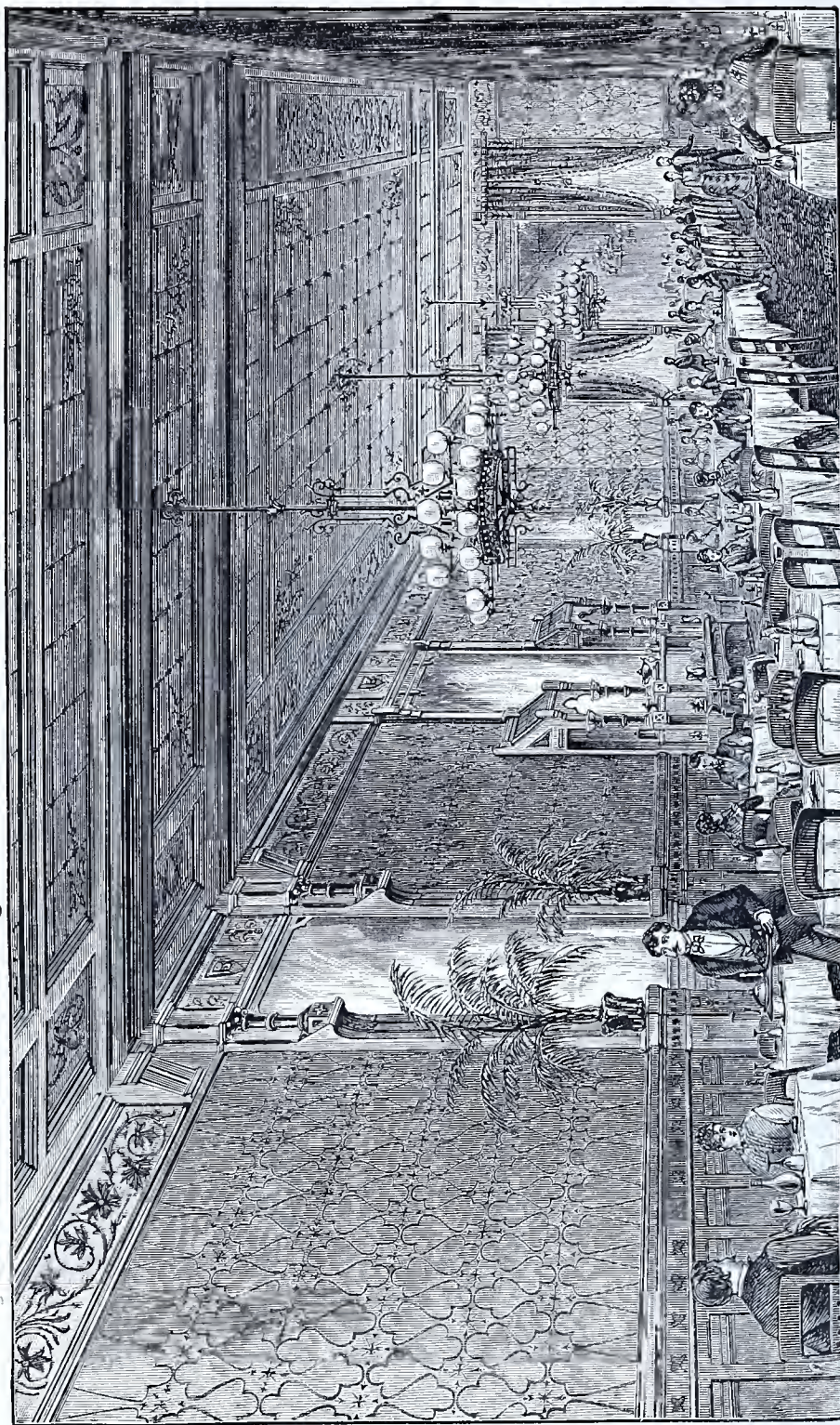
The Frenchman has his flats and café, the Englishman his lodgings and inn, and the American has tried hotel life after a fashion of his own. In New York, each of these—flats, hotels and lodgings—have found more or less favor, and people have sought in all these ways to avoid the cares of housekeeping, and yet to find a home. Besides these, are the travelers, and they, too, wish some kind of a home. So it happens that New York hotels are often filled with two classes of guests, each seeking a home. But the tourist and the permanent guest in our hotels have different ideas concerning a home. That which the traveler expects, the permanent resident does not demand, and he looks always for

advantages hotels upon the American plan can never afford.

New York hotels have been greatly praised for their size, elegance and convenience, and it would seem that where so much wealth, skill and science have been expended, the fine art of living ought to reach its highest expression. If it is possible to combine the quiet and seclusion of a private house with entire freedom from all its cares and responsibilities; if the ideal mode of living can be realized, it would appear that it might be done in New York.

On the top of Cathedral Hill, one of the highest elevations in the city, and facing the great marble Cathedral, is a new hotel that more completely realizes the perfection of living than any house of its character in existence. Its plan of construction, and system of management, are alike novel and interesting, and are worthy of attention as illustrating American constructive, engineering and household art.

The house has a frontage on Fifth avenue and Fiftieth street of two hundred and thirty feet, and its grand façade, rising eight stories above the street, gives it an imposing and massive appearance that suggests solidity, permanence and safety. Its architectural character is Elizabethan, a central pavilion rising in the mid-



THE GRAND DINING ROOM.

dle, and each end terminating in towers, with gilded iron crestings to join them together along the sky line. The materials are Baltimore brick, of the best quality, and Belleville stone, finished in various styles. The water table supporting this immense structure is of Quincy granite, appropriately dressed, and above this rises the first story, built entirely of Belleville stone, treated in various styles; rock surface with dressed edges, rubbed surfaces and pointed seams, and ending in a strikingly tasteful cornice. The superstructure is of brick, with Belleville stone quoins, belt courses and trimmings.

There are two imposing porches of rubbed Belleville stone, supported by polished red granite columns and pilasters, and above the chief entrance rises a frontispiece, also of rubbed stone, and reaching to the fifth story, and forming with its arches, niches and enrichments, a singularly striking and elegant introduction and central point of interest for the whole magnificent façade. All the stone work in the building is sculptured from solid blocks, and all cheap trickery of incised work is carefully avoided. Over each door the name "BUCKINGHAM" is cut in raised letters, and in the centre of the beautiful cornice that fitly crowns the whole edifice is a monogram, "B. H.," in painted and gilded embossed work.

At the rear of the house are two large wings, with a wide space between them, thus securing ample air and sunlight on every side.

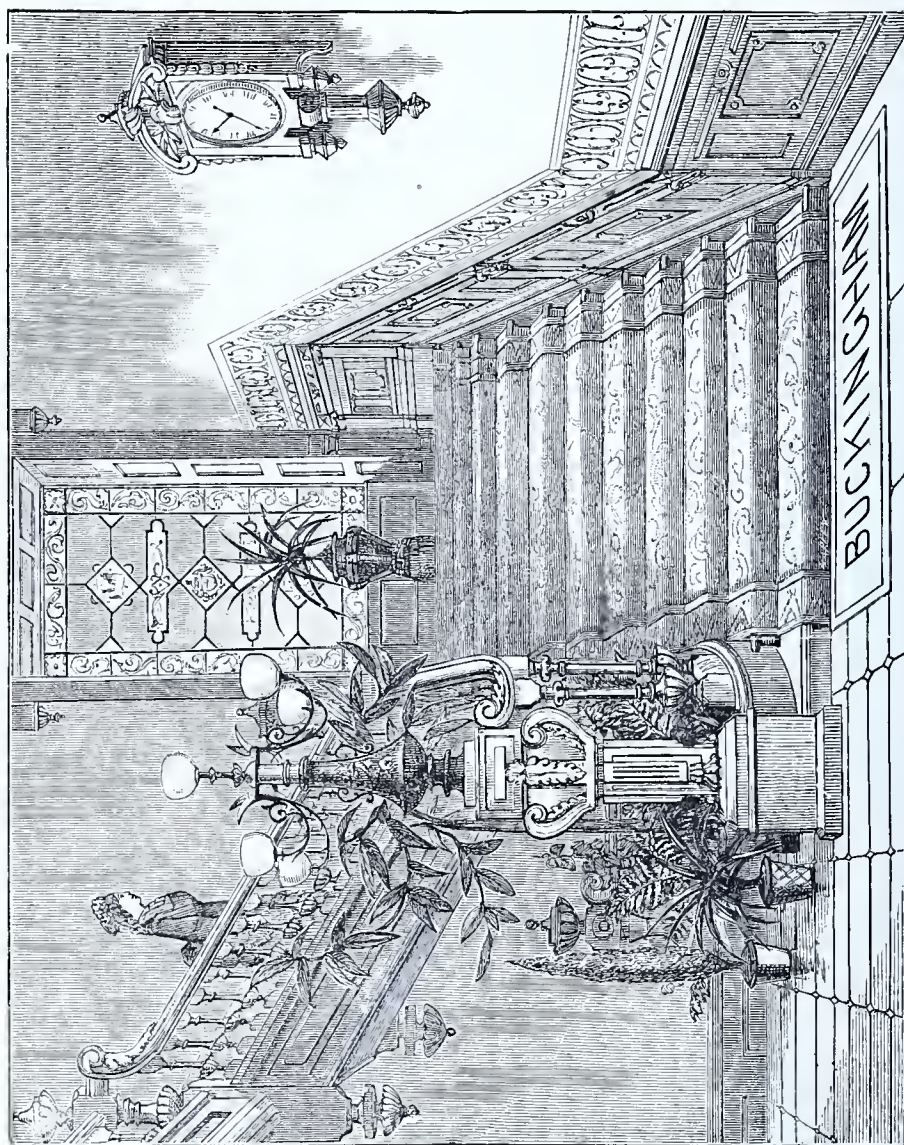
On entering the chief doorway, one passes a vestibule, and the great mahogany doors, and comes directly to the grand stairway and the office. The first impression is that of quietude, evenness of temperature, purity of air, and a gratifying sense of seclusion and peace. The idle multitude,

restless, inquisitive, and in every manner disagreeable, that so often crowds the entrance of American hotels, is happily absent. The party, both ladies and children, may enter the reception rooms or pass to the office without the sight of anything to offend the taste.

The reception room and gentlemen's parlors are finished in solid mahogany, and furnished in the English manner, quietly, and with perfect taste, and the open fire invites to ease and warmth, and here we may sit till an attendant comes to learn our wishes. There is no noise, no confusion of porters and waiters, no loungers, nor patrons of the bar who are not guests of the house; no news venders and cigar dealers. The house is for the guests and the patrons of the restaurant. There is no public bar to attract idlers, and all the halls and corridors are free to ladies and children at every hour, day or night.

Entering by the Fifth avenue door one meets a charming vista two hundred feet long, extending the whole length of the house. The marble floor, the painted walls and heavy mahogany wainscoting, combine to make a frame for the climax of the view seen through the open door of the dining room at the end of the hall. Here an open fireplace, of antique design, brilliant with beautiful Minton tiles and mirror, throws its bright glow upon its glittering fire dogs, and seems to spread out friendly hands of welcome, the best of household pictures.

A stairway must be useful, and it may be beautiful. Here, the very newel posts are made works of art and the rail, so difficult of treatment, suggests ease and safety, and gratifies the taste with exquisite carvings in solid mahogany. From the floor one can look up through the stair well to the



THE GRAND STAIRCASE.

painted dome and stained glass skylight, a hundred and twenty feet above. The stairway has two platforms on each story, and at the landings are rich stained glass windows serving at once art and use. Security is obtained by immense rolled iron beams inserted in the solid wall at every turn of the stairway, while the steps are broad and easy.

Just here we may pause to listen to the clock beside the stair striking the quarter hours in pretty chimes, and telling the hour with a bell having a fine, deep tone. The carved work of the clock is also well worthy of examination as a bit of art work.

The office is near the stairway and elevator, and close to the entrance of the dining room. Here the business of the house may be transacted expeditiously and quietly, and we can turn to the elevator and ascend to our assigned suite of rooms.

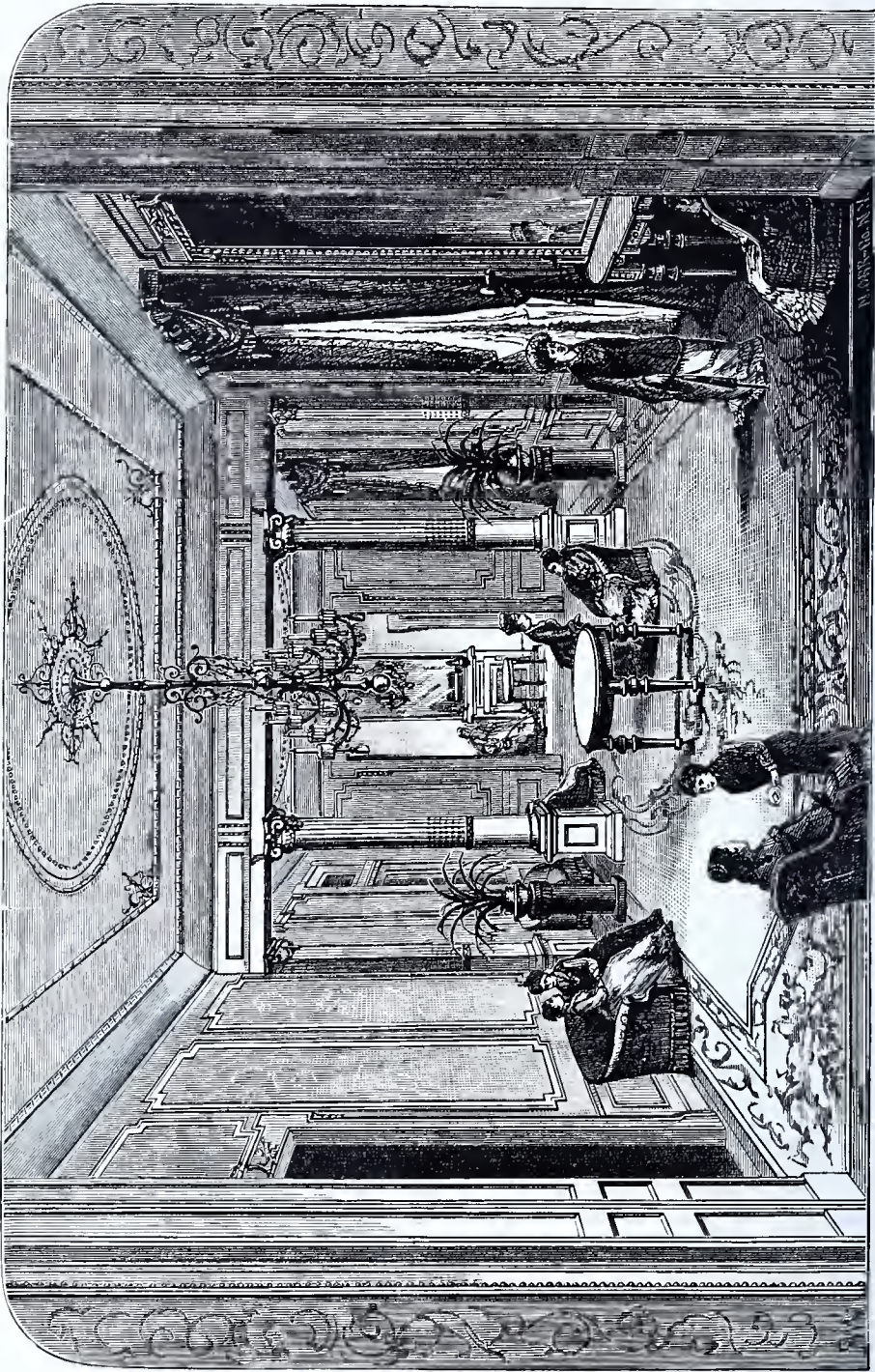
In these days the elevator has risen to all the dignity of grand stairways, and just beyond the stairs we find a handsome car, built by Otis, and finished in mahogany in the same style as the halls and stairway.

Concerning the apartments, it must be noticed that most of the rooms in the Buckingham are arranged in suites of a parlor, bedroom, bath-room and toilet room, or of a parlor, bath-room and one, two or three bedrooms. Each room opens into the others in a suite, and each has its own door into the corridor so that the number of rooms may be arranged to meet the convenience of the guests. Every bedroom has its own separate bath-room, so that each room is complete in itself. By closing the connecting door the bath-room is entirely cut off from the apartment, thereby avoiding all possible intrusion of poisonous sewer gas. Each suite has a fixed weekly rent, and the guest takes

the rooms that best meet his views of expense. The elevator makes all the seven floors alike accessible, and in the halls and corridors the carpeting and finish is exactly the same on every story.

Three things are essential in every house, light, warmth and pure air. The peculiar plan upon which this house is constructed gives abundant daylight in every room. Of all the methods devised for heating none can rival the ancient hearth, the open fire, at once warmth and light, a thing of constant beauty and the best means of ventilation ever invented. Every room in the house has its own open fireplace, with its own separate flue, lined with Scotch pipe and, besides all this, the entire building is warmed by streams of fresh air taken from out of doors, and by means of tubes ingeniously arranged, passed over coils of hot steam pipes, and delivered into each room and hall. In this connection it must be noticed, that these steam radiators, located in the basement, are not massed together in one heating chamber from which the warm air is taken for all the rooms, but each radiator is enclosed in its own air chamber and delivers its warm air to one room only, thus making the heating system of each room, or suite of rooms, quite distinct from all the rest.

The most difficult problem in modern house building is ventilation. In a hotel where a number of people live under one roof, there must be an abundance of pure air or discomfort and perhaps disease will appear, and the house will be unsafe in a sanitary sense. Currents of pure air, warmed by steam, may flow into every part of a house, but if there be no escape, no vent for excess of or provision for withdrawing the vitiated air, the atmospheric currents will soon stagnate,



THE LADIES' DRAWING ROOM.

and the house will not be fit for healthful residence. Here, the open fireplaces in all the rooms make the best of ventilators.

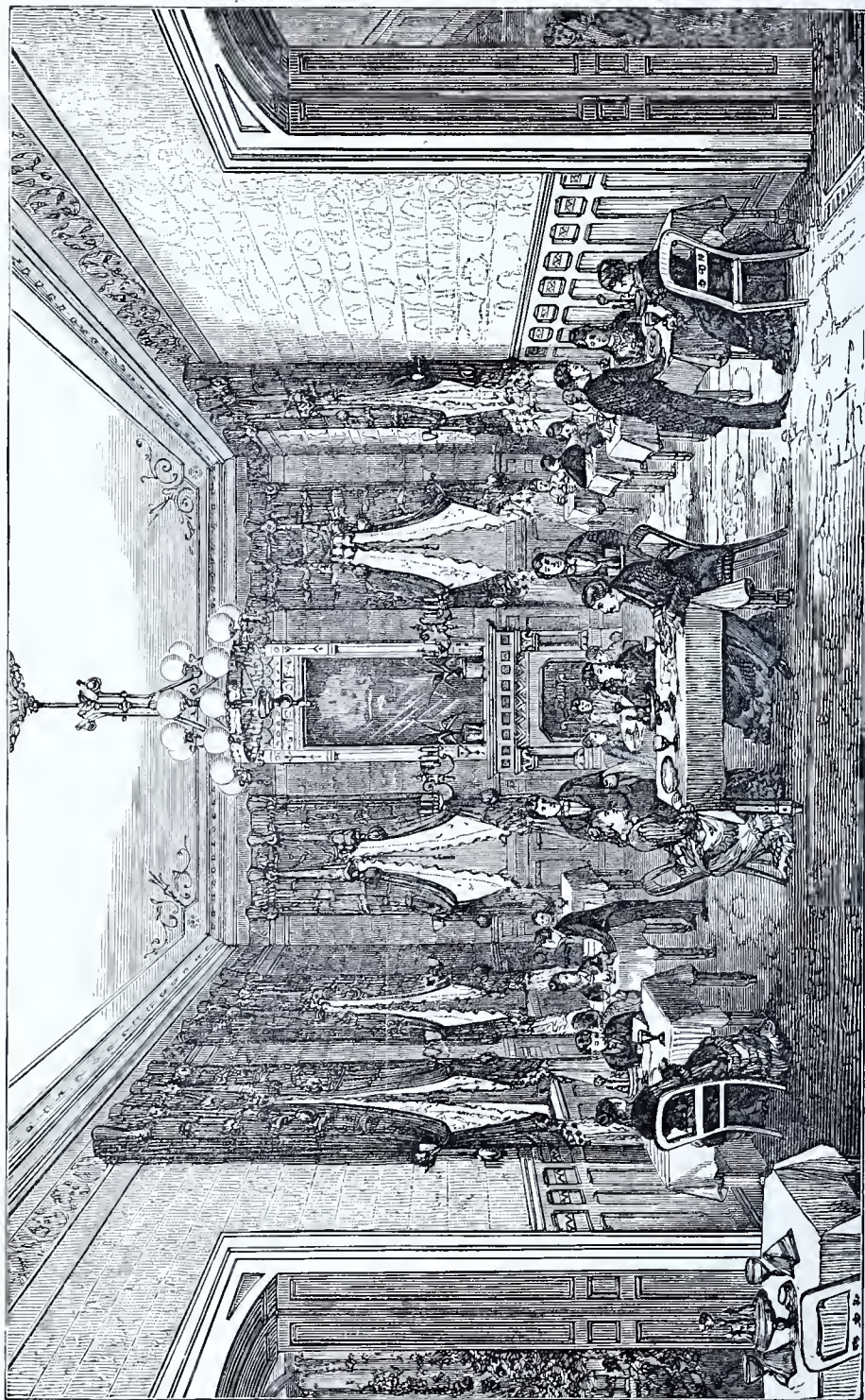
Extra provisions are also made at great expense for securing the most perfect ventilation in all the halls, corridors, public rooms and bath-rooms.

The most simple and effectual method of removing vitiated air from a room or from a mine is to make "an upcast shaft," to quote a miner's phrase. He has an empty shaft opening to the outer air, and at the bottom of this shaft he keeps a fire burning, or he turns a steam jet into it. In either case he heats the air in his shaft, and it is quickly cast out at the top. In this manner the upcast shaft acts as a ventilator, sucking up the air from below and discharging it above.

In this house, which is ventilated under the personal supervision of Professor Hyslop, there are two immense upcast shafts, 140 feet high, reaching from sub-cellar to roof. The smoke and flame from the kitchen ranges and from the steam boilers are taken through metal pipes upward through these shafts, heating the air in them on the way, and causing it to move upward and escape at the top of the building. The kitchen, every bath-room, and all the halls and public parlors in the house are connected by pipes with these upcast shafts. In the public rooms these pipes open through spaces in the ornamental work over each chandelier. The products of combustion from the gas lamps and all bad odors in the rooms are swept away instantly and thus the rooms are at all times pure and sweet. There is not the faintest hint of cooking even in the immediate neighborhood of the kitchen, and every bath-room is absolutely safe in a sanitary sense.

While ground rent in our cities is so high, buildings of all kinds must, with a view to economy, be lofty. When floor is thus piled above floor and the elevator makes them all equally accessible, it is essential that due protection be made against fire. This house is as well built and protected against fire as skill and money can make it, but, as still further precaution against danger, there is a hydrant and hose on every floor fully prepared for instant use. The hose is enclosed in a small recess set in the wall, and protected by an ornamental glass door.

In the construction of the house the advice of the Engineer of the Board of Underwriters was sought and every device was employed, that could in any manner give extra security, such as iron furring and iron wire netting for plastering (in place of laths). An extra stairway of iron almost entirely surrounded by brick extends from sub-cellar to roof, and out of doors on the southern wall, is a permanent and substantial fire escape opening upon balconies on every floor, and reaching to the ground in the rear. More than this, a watchman constantly patrols every unlocked part of the house, from basement to top floor. At three given points on every floor is an electric press-knob communicating with an automatic recorder, and the watchman on his rounds must touch each of these knobs in turn, or his neglect is registered in the office below. This register is kept locked, and the key carried by a responsible party, who notes each morning where and when the watchman walked at each hour of the night, and thus secures faithful performance of duty. These knobs are so located that to reach them the watchman must visit every accessible part, and thereby discover anything that may be amiss.



THE BREAKFAST ROOM.

Passing through the halls one enters the great mahogany doors of the dining room, and is welcomed to the room by the blaze of the open fire. Of all the rooms in a house the dining room should be the most attractive. This room is peculiar in its character, suggesting by its heavily timbered ceiling, its antique sideboard and generous fireplaces, the English dining halls of the fourteenth century, and yet it has that atmosphere of refined luxury the English halls never knew. To be minute is to be tiresome. There is no need to describe the walls decorated in imitation of the old stamped leather hangings, the frescoes, carpeting, mirrors and chandeliers. They are of the best and most costly description and yet when one looks about, no one feature demands attention. One mind developed the entire room and combined everything with consummate skill. True art is never staring and obtrusive, but is reposeful, suggestive and harmonious. One may sit here a long time and wonder what gives the place its exquisite charm only to find that it is simple purity and refinement of taste, richness toned by culture.

From this room an iron bridge thrown from one wing of the building to the other, and very happily treated as a conservatory, leads to the breakfast room which is finished in quite a different style, and is an excellent sample of the best school of modern household art, rich and yet refined and chaste.

All the public rooms and halls on this floor, except the dining room and breakfast room which are wooded in oak, are finished in solid mahogany, and the ceilings and walls are painted in harmony with the wood work and furnishings. The doors and windows are fitted with richly embossed French

plate glass, ornamented with conventionalized flowers and foliage.

On the basement floor is a large and luxuriously fitted-up smoking and reading room, and a barber's shop and telegraph station.

There is no public bar or newsstand or other enticement for the idle multitude that so often crowds our hotels to the annoyance of the guests and injury of the house.

These make all the public rooms, save the ladies' parlor on the second floor. Before examining that, it may be worth the while to glance at the manufacturing plant under the house. Cooking, laundry work, baking and heating have been hitherto considered as mere domestic labors that any woman of average ability could perform. They are really arts and sciences, employing skilled men and women, aided by steam power. To keep such a household as may be gathered in the Buckingham in comfort, demands a number of steam appliances of various kinds. There are two stories under the sidewalk, a basement and sub-cellar, and in the sub-cellar are the steam pumps and engines, the laundry and heating appliances, all of which are absolutely fire-proof. The steam boilers are placed quite outside of the building, and under the sidewalk, and adjoining them is an elevator for lifting goods from the sub-cellar and basement to the sidewalk. A noiseless engine supplies power for the laundry, and two hoisting engines control the passenger and baggage elevators. A powerful noiseless duplex pump forces Croton water to the great reservoir, at the top of the building, which supplies all the cold water used in the house, both in the public and private rooms, and gives a good head of water for the fire hydrants in case of need. The exhaust steam for all



THE SMOKING ROOM.

these engines is thoroughly condensed, and none is allowed to escape at the top of the building.

The basement floor contains the refrigerators, kitchen, bake shop, wine room, store-rooms, servants' dining room, the dining room for the chiefs of departments, and the cooks' dining room. The refrigerators are designed to hold the fish, chops, butter, poultry, &c., in separate store places so that there can be no injury to the flavors. The kitchen, 95 feet long, is light, well ventilated and sunny, rare qualities in a kitchen, and is admirably arranged for work.

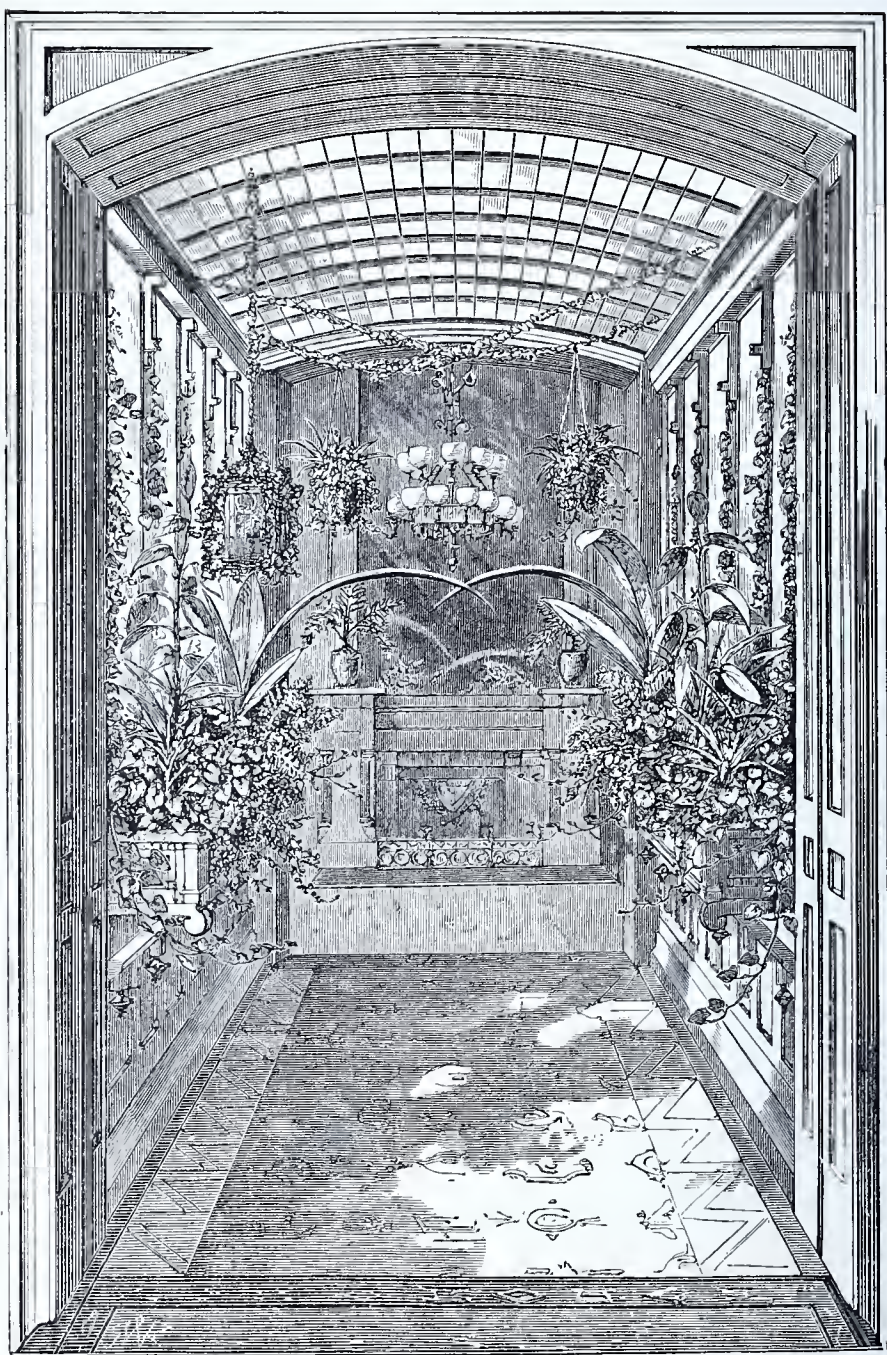
The ranges, ovens, plate warmers, &c., are placed along one side of the room, and over all is hung a hood to catch the smoke and steam, and carry it off into the upcast shaft, and thus sweep all odors away into the outer air at the top of the house. Adjoining the kitchen is the pastry room and bake house, and arranged upon the most approved plans. The cooks have their own dining room, a bright and pleasant room and the larger hall for the general help is really better, cleaner and sweeter than many a dining room in our rural hotels. The nurses' dining room is furnished in oak and has a handsome mirror, bordered by illustrated tiles, setting forth the classic story of the House that Jack built. The infant patron of the house here takes his simple breakfast, and studies art and English literature as an aid to digestion.

Washing, once a domestic drudgery, is now a trade, employing power tools. Washing machines, wringers, centrifugal dryers, or hydro-extractors, mangles and ironing machines are now all driven by steam power and at high speeds, and much of the labor of washing and ironing is thus done by machinery. The drying is also equally well done in steam-heated

rooms at an immense saving of time and labor. All the latest and best laundry machinery is here employed, and the result is that the washing for the whole house is done expeditiously, and without disturbing a single person in the building.

These are the useful things, the economic labors on which domestic peace and comfort depend. Above, on the second floor, is the more artistic side of the house—the ladies parlor and reception room. This room is an adaptation from a salon in the Grand-Trianon, known as the *Salle des Glaces* and decorated to suit the taste of Marie Antoinette. The colors are white, French gray and gold. The room is broken by an arch supported by two columns in the centre, and opens into a smaller room at either end by folding doors. The carpets and furniture were made expressly to match the room, and the whole work, decorations, pear-shaped crystal chandeliers, marble work, fireplaces and draperies were designed by one mind. The effect is rich, and yet pure and reposeful, and though the walls are of light tints the warm color of the carpets and curtains save them from coldness and severity. The room is a picture, and is, perhaps, the best sample of household art of its character to be found in the country.

Could one visit all the private parlors and bridal suites in the Buckingham, one would find everywhere the same perfect taste. The furniture is mainly mediæval in design and is much more substantial and costly than is commonly found in American hotels. Most of the carpeting is in the new styles of Indian patterns, tasteful and chaste, and Indian rugs are used before every hearth in all the rooms both public and private. The chandeliers are all of real bronze, and were made from patterns specially designed



THE BRIDGE.

for the rooms they were to serve.

No attempt is made at mere display. The "steamboat style" is nowhere visible, and if the superficial observer fails to discern anything particularly striking at the first glance about the interior of the house, it is because of its real art. Wait a while, look about and study the walls, decorations and furniture, and the refined and cultured taste that has stamped its mark on everything will soon be recognized. True art is subdued, and perpetually satisfactory, and never obtrusive.

Such is the Buckingham, a hotel and a home. It more nearly realizes the fine art of living than anything yet devised. It affords peace, seclu-

sion and home-like privacy, with entire freedom from care and household troubles. For the luxuries and convenience in every suite, the prices asked are no more than reasonable.

The European plan, on which this house is conducted, recommends itself for simplicity, equity and common sense, and is justly popular with all sensible people.

For the traveler, spending a week or more in New York, and wishing a home for wife and children, and for the family seeking to avoid the cares of housekeeping, the Buckingham offers the best that art, science and money can afford.



Messrs. GALE, FULLER & CO.,

PROPRIETORS OF THE

BUCKINGHAM HOTEL,

Desire to call the attention of the Public to the

SCHEDULE OF PRICES

given below, which they feel, considering the accommodations afforded, will compare favorably with other first-class hotels.

	PER WEEK.
Single Rooms —Very neatly furnished in Eastlake style,	\$7 00
Bachelors' Rooms —With Private Bathroom and Closet, and Clothes Closet, Eastlake furnishing,	14 00
Large Bedrooms —Handsomely furnished in light and dark woods, with Private Bathroom and Closet, suitable for two persons,	\$17 50 to 28 00
Parlors and Bedrooms —In Mediæval styles (with Private Bathroom and Closet),	\$45 00 to 55 00
Suites —Elegantly decorated, comprising Parlors, Bedrooms, Toilet-rooms and Bathrooms,	\$65 00 to 125 00
Maid's Room and Board , per week,	\$17 50
Restaurant charges the same as at any first-class House.	

(Transient Rates—Pro-rata.)

From the New York Times.

The new and elegantly furnished Buckingham Hotel, at Fifth Avenue and Fiftieth Street, which was recently opened, is fast gaining popularity on account of its admirable location, comfortable accommodations, excellent *cuisine* and moderate charges. It is conducted on the European plan, and it is so arranged as to be equally desirable for either transient or permanent guests, and offers admirable facilities for families who wish to combine the conveniences of a hotel with the quiet and privacy of an attractive home.

From the New York Commercial Advertiser.

The Buckingham Hotel, just completed, on Fifth avenue and Fiftieth street, near Central Park, is in various respects a remarkable building. It is the first attempt to build a first-class hotel in New York for private families. The idea pursued in making and executing all plans was "real comfort and convenience." Health has been a first consideration, with special reference to heating and ventilation. The plan of heating adopted is that of indirect radiation. In place of carrying the steam up to the several rooms, the coils are concentrated in huge piles, inclosed in brick work in the sub-cellar. Cold air is brought in, and, after passing about the hot pipes, is carried up to the rooms by Scotch vitrified tile pipes built into the heavy brick walls of the building. Directly over each of the large chandeliers are ventilating openings in the ceilings, hidden in the bossy ornament of the centre, which connect with one of two grand shafts that extend from cellar to roof, and the air within these shafts is heated by flues connecting with the boilers and kitchen ranges, causing a strong upward current. The means of transit are ample; there is a passenger elevator and one for baggage, the main staircase and another, iron framed, which extends from the cellar to the roof. Every possible appliance is provided for immediately extinguishing any interior fire, as well as for easy escape from any part of the building. Fire extinguishers are also at hand, and a watchman's detector, working by electricity, connects with dials in every unlocked part of the building. Much might be said of the grand staircase; the solid, polished mahogany wainscoting; the sumptuous parlors, public and private, especially the ladies' parlors, in the style revived under the reign of Louis XVI.; the dining and breakfast rooms, in English Gothic; mediæval furniture, including huge "fire dogs," and rich embossed leather for the side walls, in imitation of the old, stamped leather hangings of baronial times. But as to details, "seeing is believing." We wish success to the enterprise.

From the New York Journal of Commerce.

THE BUCKINGHAM.—This is the name of the new hotel on the corner of Fifth Avenue and Fiftieth Street, now completed and ready for guests. It has been built in the most careful manner under the direct supervision of its owner, Mr. George Kemp. The structure combines solidity and strength with great beauty of finish inside and out, and unusual exposure to light. In respect of equipment and provision for comfort it possesses all the improvements which have been tested in the experience of the best hotels in this country. It is heated by open grates and by registers, the latter being introduced upon a plan partly new, with special reference to ventilation and health. The dining and breakfast rooms on the ground floor are spacious apartments, fitted with exquisite taste in the English Gothic style, in oak relieved with inlays of mora wood and tracings of color on gold ground. The reception room and gentlemen's parlors, also two private parlors, are models of richness and elegance in all their appointments. But the most sumptuous effects are reserved for the ladies' parlors, three in number, on the first floor. These are elaborately decorated in delicate shades of straw, lilac, gray, &c.; the mantels are of pure statuary marble; the chandeliers of gilt bronze, with crystal pendants; the carpets Axminster, manufactured after original designs from Marcotte & Co.; the chairs covered with a beautiful texture of red and gray; the curtains are of red satin with rich borders. The entire upper part of the building is arranged for suites of rooms, the furniture varying somewhat to suit different tastes, and so connected that a family of ten or twenty persons can be accommodated as comfortably as a family of two. The Buckingham differs from other hotels in one regard: it has no public drinking bar, but provides a most attractive coffee room for the exclusive use of guests of the house. A passenger elevator gives easy access to every floor. Mr. Kemp instructed his architects to build a hotel which would be as near perfection for its purpose as skill and money could make it, and that worthy ambition seems to be fully realized in the Buckingham.

From the New York Herald.

Another first class hotel was formally opened last evening at Fifth Avenue and Fiftieth Street, and named the Buckingham. Fronting on Fifth Avenue and the Cathedral, located in the centre of fashionable New York, conducted by gentlemen who have for many years catered to the wealthiest citizens of the North and South during their summer sojourns at Fort William Henry Hotel, at Lake George ; the International, Niagara Falls ; and the Brevoort House, in this city, the Buckingham has, in its management, all the elements of success. The house is elegantly furnished, the decorations of the rooms being fashioned after the English styles of the fourteenth century. The various appointments compare favorably with those of the best hotels in the country. The protection against fire is ample, and more than ordinary advantages are offered to large parties who desire to meet in the house, by the arrangement of rooms, which permits an entire floor to be thrown *en suite*. Last evening the *chef de cuisine*, Domenico Piretti, late of the Union Club, astonished the six hundred guests with a superb supper, the table decorations representing an Erie Railway train, the Centennial bell, a *trophée de musique*, a Swiss cottage and a temple of Liberty. The house is delightfully situated, the rooms well lighted, ventilated and heated. The attendance is very good. The lessees are Messrs. Gale, Fuller & Co. Mr. Gale was for eighteen years the proprietor of the Fort William Henry Hotel, at Lake George, and for the last two years of the International at Niagara Falls. Mr. Fuller filled a position of trust for ten years at the Brevoort House in this city.

From the New York Tribune.

The Buckingham Hotel, corner Fifth Avenue and Fiftieth Street, offers special inducements to travelers and families who desire comfort and superb accommodations for the Winter months or during their stay in this city. The Buckingham is unquestionably the most perfectly ventilated and equipped hotel in this country ; the *cuisine* is the very best, the location is central and convenient, the Grand Central Depot, the Fourth and Sixth Avenue cars, and the finest schools and churches are within a few moments' walk. During the sojourn here of the Emperor and Empress of Brazil they remained a longer time at the Buckingham than at any other hotel in this country, and when leaving for Europe their Majesties congratulated the proprietors, Messrs. Gale, Fuller & Co., on having the finest and best equipped hotel that they had found in this or any other country, and pronounced the charges very reasonable and entirely satisfactory.

From the Home Journal.

Architects, hotel keepers, as well as those who pass their lives in hotels would find it profitable to make a thorough inspection of the new Buckingham Hotel, on Fifth Avenue and Fiftieth Street. In this remark we have no special reference to the beauty and ornamentation of its exterior or interior. The superior location, on the most fashionable thoroughfare, near Central Park ; the attractive front of Baltimore brick and Belleville stone ; the dining halls after the English fourteenth century style ; the ladies' parlor, with a pure specimen of Louis XVI. ornamentation ; the white Algerian marble mantels and Eastlake furniture, are all worthy of note and remark ; but compared with the admirable hygienic construction of the building, and the perfect arrangements for the safety, comfort and good health of the occupants all this beauty and art are as nothing. Let us examine its safety. There are two separate elevators ; two staircases, from cellar to top, iron framed ; ample means of escape in case of fire, from the roof to gardens below, besides which there are mechanical fire detectors, constant watchman, and a profusion of hose always ready. The appliances for heating and for supplying pure air to all the apartments are made upon the latest and most approved scientific principles, the details of which we may at some other time explain. In the meanwhile let those interested "go through" the Buckingham, and they will agree with us that in construction and in its arrangements for securing health and comfort to the guests, it is a perfect success.